

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Sadie Gjonaj and I am from Storrs. I am also part of Planned Parenthood Generation Action.

I stand in support of SB284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in making sure our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we all need and deserve. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

In order to be a healthy parent to a child, one must be a healthy adult. Regardless of immigration status, we as human beings have a responsibility to one another. As a daughter of Albanian immigrants myself, I know the hardship of watching your parents struggle. It is hard enough to come to a new country with young children, having no money and maybe not even speaking the native language.

Many times I watched my own parents struggle to fill out health documentation, school forms, and just to get by. Although I was born in the states, I watched many of my own cousins get denied access to healthcare because of their age. Many children of immigrants suffer exponentially as their young minds try to aid their parents in navigating their lives in a new land. There is no reason their health should suffer in addition to the worries that plague their everyday lives.

I have experienced first hand a young relative of mine experience what I remember to be a day of pure evil. She was a young child with a broken leg who was refused admission to a hospital because she was not a United States citizen. Her parents were terrified for her health, their deportation, and their futures in this country. Don't be a part of the problem. Immigrants and their children should not be denied healthcare in the US because they were not born in this country. We can all trace our lineage in this country back to immigration. The child being denied access to healthcare could be your child. The adult being denied access to healthcare could be your parent. Citizen or not, we are all *human beings*. And that should matter.

I support S.B. 284 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,

*Sadie Gjonaj*